


The Garden Club of America

*Centennial Annual Report 2013*

# INTRODUCTION TO THE GCA CENTENNIAL ANNUAL REPORT:



## PHILADELPHIA, PA: MAY 1, 2013...



Ladies & gentlemen and special guests, one hundred years have passed since the founding of The Garden Club of America. It is with a full and grateful heart—and with the purpose of honoring those of you in attendance for this historic occasion— that I welcome you and thank you for your invaluable support over the last two years. I am certain I need not tell you that I take it as the greatest of honors to serve as your president at this time and to have the privilege to come among you on such a momentous occasion. The most wonderful circumstance of all is that we are assembled here together in Philadelphia, the city of our birth, to reflect on a century of achievement, to honor our founders and forbearers whose vision and work resulted in the distinguished organization we know today, and to consider a vision for the future....

In May, 1913, a group of far-sighted women gathered here in Philadelphia, representing 12 garden clubs from 7 states, and carried into effect the – at that time – quite original idea

of forming a national garden organization. Today, our number stands at 200. What started as an intimate group, which came together quite informally to enjoy each other's gardens, has now grown into a great network of distinguished clubs having many and varied interests.

For a few minutes, I would like to reflect on our past century of achievement, for I believe that all of a person's values and hopes for the future are shaped by his impressions of the past. Without the knowledge of our history – our collective memories – there can be no organizational continuity; no unity. We must study our history and work hard to continue to transmit this history from one generation to the next.

- ❖ In the early 1900s, books documenting historic landscapes and largely written by women, many of whom were GCA club members, began to appear in the U.S. By 1922, The Garden Club of America's Historic Gardens Committee began collecting material for its now seminal two-volume work *Gardens of Colony and State*.
- ❖ The GCA's next 1920's endeavor was the commission of a nation-wide set of glass lantern slides in order to record members' gardens. This slide library was donated to the Smithsonian in 1992 and became the core collection of The Archives of American Gardens.
- ❖ The 1928 endowment of our Scholarship in Landscape Architecture at the American Academy in Rome was touted at our 25th Anniversary Annual Meeting in Philadelphia as a significant accomplishment. Since that time, the GCA has funded more than eleven hundred scholars through our scholarship programs.
- ❖ In 1928, inspired by a plea to Save the Redwoods in California, our club members raised funds with which a



Consider Marco Polo's description of a bridge, stone by stone. "But which is the stone that supports the bridge?" Kublai Khan asks. "The bridge is not supported by one stone or another," Marco answers, "but by the line of the arch that they form." Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds: "Why do you speak to me of the stones? It is only the arch that matters to me." Polo answers: "Without stones, there is no arch." Italo Calvino, *Le città invisibili* (1972)



large grove of these famous trees was purchased and presented to the park system of California. Dedication of the GCA Grove occurred in May 1934.

- ❖ From 1935 to 1938, garden club members established a fund for the GCA projects to honor our first President, Elizabeth Price Martin ...
- ❖ In 1933, the Board of Directors created the Horticultural Committee...The committee at once assumed importance – and vital this committee has remained throughout our existence!
- ❖ Founded in 1948, The GCA/RHS Interchange Fellowship is a reciprocal exchange program, sponsored jointly by The Garden Club of America and the Royal Horticultural Society. The opportunities available to the Interchange Fellows are unique in the horticultural field, and the network of alumni has become a lasting legacy...
- ❖ At The Garden Club of America's 50th Anniversary in 1963 in Philadelphia, Mrs. Corning, presiding president, had the following to say: "We shall be treading on hallowed ground the next few days, and our every step will echo with tradition". Fifty years later, Mrs. Corning's remarks are just as appropriate for those of us in attendance for this historic meeting.
- ❖ Featured Conservation speaker at this momentous 1963 occasion was Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, who made the following comments: "Certainly if the face of America is more attractive, if we have more – an America the Beautiful, than an ugly America – the Garden Club of America deserves much of the credit." Our Conservation & NAL Committees as well as a host of others continue today with this diligent work. I quote the following from our 75th Anniversary History: "The GCA membership reflects a complete preoccupation with ecology and the environment of the future. The organization has truly undertaken the guardianship of mankind's heritage and this is being done wholeheartedly, earnestly, and with dedication."

- ❖ In 1976, the Bicentennial year of our country was celebrated within the GCA under the capable Presidency of Mrs. George P. Bissell, Jr. Each of our clubs was involved in worthy Bicentennial projects...
- ❖ In June of 1981, The Garden Club of America cosponsored "Gardens of Delight" - a major exhibition of Horticulture & Decorative Arts which was staged at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in NY. The GCA participated by lending many of our rare books...
- ❖ Since 1988, our 75th Anniversary Meeting in Detroit, Michigan, our organization has continued its deep commitment to the continuation of its meritorious record of community improvement and education and service. We are now on the cusp of beginning the history of a second century that will encompass work that our founders would never have dreamed possible.

In contemplation of our history, it is obvious that leadership has been one of the keys to our organization's effectiveness. Our history is filled with descriptions of powerful, heroic leaders – risk takers, visionaries, entrepreneurs and agents of change.

But it has neither been through the work of just a single leader, nor a group of leaders, who have brought us to this glorious centennial moment in our history, but rather, the diligent work of throngs of garden club members throughout the ages.

Without our garden clubs, there is no GCA. Consider the following prosaic yet easily overlooked fact, that all of the garden club members who will be alive in the next 20 years have already been born. We must begin now to prepare for this next generation.

Just as our leaders in the past were empowered by knowledge, our overarching challenge now is to provide the opportunity for education for our club members and our current and future leaders so that they may continue to be



visionaries, so that we may imbue them with the understanding to execute on their vision.

21st century Garden Club of America leaders must develop new skills and develop the capacity to better understand the needs of our clubs, whose interests often intersect one with the other. We are an organization with many points of view; therefore we must be very clear in our Garden Club of America mission and encourage clarity in the missions of our clubs.

With the increased velocity of modern changes, we do not know what the world will be like a hundred years from now. For certain, the ideals of the generation of the year 2113 will not be the same as the generation of the year 2013. We can only surmise how an ever expanding population & an unknown eventual effect from changes in our climate will affect our future world. Our gardening world will be governed in ways which we can no more anticipate than the 20th century could anticipate the gardening trends and needs of the 21st, which still in part sway us – but we are learning! No matter the turn that gardening may take, the

GCA's legend will ever appear more stellar in the blending of centuries because of the work we have accomplished, and the work you – as garden club members – set forth to do in this next century...

This seems like a perfect moment to ask you to hold your breath and to ask yourselves: ***What is my club's mission? Where are we? And where should this journey take us? What are the current trends in my club and what is our vision for the future? How do we shape tomorrow's garden club and how do we empower our members to shape tomorrow's society?***

Our clubs are the heartbeat of our organization; our club members are its lifeblood; our staff the pillar of support; our Corporate Board is its guiding authoritative spirit and each of those who have gone before us embodies our organization's soul. With our combined endless support and passion, together we will continue to work to attain a common Garden Club of America vision and purpose, and lead our esteemed organization into a vigorous next century.

Looking back in history, the faces of our members have changed, but the passion for our organization and the determination to secure its future has not. As we enter this second century, we do so with no less confidence, no less commitment, no less optimism and no less willingness to work hard to achieve our highest aspirations. I leave you today with the hope and expectation that during the next 100 years our members, inspired by the past and committed to the future, will continue to protect the beauty of our earth, and embrace the knowledge and love of gardening with all of the benefits and joys of association.

God Bless each of you and may God keep our organization strong and worthy of its history.

From the Centennial Address of  
GCA President, Marian W. Hill

**Editor's Note:** During the GCA's centennial year, 2012-2013, each of the organization's national committees and 200 member clubs celebrated our anniversary in a unique way. From initiating a national oral history project to writing singular club histories; from recognizing a particularly outstanding group of national medalists to honoring esteemed individual club members; from planting 24,000 trees to commemorating one single species; from introducing a new position paper on agriculture to endorsing our commitment to sustainable meetings; the GCA's reaffirmation of its founding principles saw broad support throughout the organization. Consider the following accomplishments during the GCA's centennial:

"Thank you for inviting me to become an Honorary Member of the GCA. For me, it is a huge privilege to be part of an organization that I hold in high esteem and means so much to me for many reasons. My interest in gardens and gardening began when we inherited Kirby House in 1989 with its neglected garden and the feeling that I would like to restore it and create a garden to be the setting for the elegant 18th Century house. To help financially with the undertaking, I started to have GCA members to stay at Kirby for week-long garden tours. Out of this, many deep and lasting friendships have formed and inspiration drawn from visiting many outstanding gardens. I studied practical horticulture and garden design and set to work on my garden. Over the past ten years I have had the added delight of being invited to come to the US to speak about English Gardens, with the opportunity to travel all over the country and visit my friends. I am deeply touched and delighted by this honour which cements my trans-Atlantic links with The Garden Club of America and my many friends in this wonderful organization."

...Katherine Astor

## ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE.


In 1916, the GCA Admissions Committee created a special membership category that has evolved into Honorary Membership. Each year, the GCA recognizes extraordinary efforts in gardening, conservation and education through the extension of these honorary memberships. 2013's Honorary Members are:

- ❖ **Katherine Astor:** A dedicated, knowledgeable gardener, noted lecturer, and gracious hostess for private tours of English gardens, Mrs. Astor has restored gardens at Kirby House, her home in England.
- ❖ **Peter Del Tredici:** As Senior Research Scientist, Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University, Dr. Del Tredici inspires and captivates audiences with his enthusiasm, knowledge and humor.
- ❖ **Darrel Morrison:** A passionate advocate for native plants, Mr. Morrison has designed native plant landscapes in Texas, Chicago, Storm King Art Center, and New York Botanical Garden.
- ❖ **Paul Redman:** A dedicated horticulturist, Mr. Redman is the Director of Longwood Gardens and Franklin Park Botanical Garden. He is an enthusiastic advocate of the three-way partnership with the GCA, the Royal Horticultural Society and Longwood Gardens.

The Admissions Committee was also delighted to announce that, after a required five-year 'probationary' period, two GCA clubs voted to become permanent members of the GCA: the Carrie T. Watson Garden Club, Zone V and the Shreveport Garden Study Club, Zone IX.



## ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE.



Philadelphia, the birthplace of The Garden Club of America, provided the perfect venue for the GCA's Centennial Annual Meeting. With 650 club delegates and all 200 member clubs in attendance, President Marian W. Hill called the meeting to order on May 1, 2013—100 years after the GCA's inaugural Business Meeting on May 1, 1913. The historic meeting was co-chaired by Leslie Purple of Wissahickon GC and Laura Gregg of The Garden Workers, along with honorary co-chairmen Gina Bissell of GC of Wilmington, Ann Coburn of Village GC of Sewickley and the late Bunnie duPont of the GCs of Wilmington and Palm Beach.

The fourteen Zone V clubs in Delaware and Pennsylvania hosting the meeting were: Carrie T. Watson GC; Four Counties GC; GC of Allegheny County; The GC of Philadelphia; GC of Wilmington; The Garden Workers; The Gardeners; Huntingdon Valley GC; The Planters; Providence GC of Pennsylvania; Village GC of Sewickley; The Weeders; West Chester GC; and Wissahickon GC.

In keeping with the meeting's focus on the member clubs that comprise the GCA, attendees were inspired by the 'Take Five' video that documented the significant impact that five GCA clubs have had on their communities.

❖ The meeting featured four dynamic speakers. The first was **Jane Golden**, Executive Director for Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. She has worked to solve Philadelphia's graffiti problem, turning defacing graffiti into professional murals. Her initiative has created 3,600 public works of art and earned her the nickname of "Cool Jane" by admiring gang members.

❖ **Elizabeth Banks**, President of the Royal Horticultural Society, reviewed the long-standing relationship between RHS

and the GCA. She applauded the Interchange Fellowships, begun over 65 years ago, that fund student exchanges in horticulture and landscape architecture. She noted that both the RHS and the GCA are celebrating their 100-year anniversary in 2013.

❖ **Alice Waters** was the meeting's keynote speaker and regaled the audience with her stories of discovering how good food can taste and championing organic food and sustainable gardening. One of the pioneers of the local food movement, Alice has changed the way we eat and think about the origins of our food. In her words, "education engages the American spirit and inspires a growing new world within the shell of the old."

❖ **Amy Freitag**, Executive Director of New York Restoration Project, and daughter of former GCA president Chris Freitag, captivated meeting delegates with her knowledge and respect for the long-standing conservation efforts of women in the GCA. Having researched the history of the GCA for a forthcoming book, Amy made all present proud with an entertaining and informative presentation about the accomplishments and influence the GCA has garnered over the past 100 years.

From the inspiring speakers to the laudable award recipients, from the over-the-top flower show to scarf sales that broke all previous records, Zone V hosted an enviable gathering, fully celebrating the shared joy of the GCA centennial. Looking to the future and enjoying the benefits of association, attendees participated in workshops that included GCA program offerings, new technology and club-specific issues. Visits to magnificent and historic gardens in Chestnut Hill and the Main Line, elegant dinners in private homes and at private clubs, including the nation's oldest women's club and the nation's oldest men's club, complemented the enriching and dynamic meeting. The meeting saluted the accomplishments of the past 100 years and kindled sincere enthusiasm for the next 100.

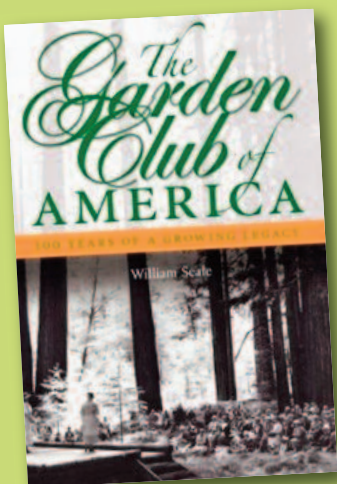
"Surely your thoughts, like mine, turn to the future and we wonder what the next hundred years will hold for the GCA . . . the future of this organization lies in our ability to adapt to change, and . . . it is critical that we combine tradition with modernity to remain relevant."

Katie Heins, GCA  
President, 2013-2015

## ARCHIVES COMMITTEE.

The Archives Committee, under the leadership of Edie Loening, was instrumental in researching and reviewing the GCA's centennial book written by William Seale (see below). The committee also worked on the airport display that welcomed GCA delegates to Philadelphia for the Centennial Annual Meeting. Finally, the committee began a project called Oaks Among Acorns, which includes biographies of outstanding members.

## THE BOOK COMMITTEE.



White House historian William Seale captures the extraordinary 100-year history of the GCA in his commemorative work, *The Garden Club of America - 100 Years of a Growing Legacy*. More than just a collection of anecdotes and memories, the book is a stirring account of the contributions the GCA has made to the political, historical and cultural fabric of our

nation. When Book Committee Chair Nancy Murray proudly presented the GCA with the book she said,

“Six and one-half years ago, the GCA president asked me to form a committee whose mission was to produce a book on the GCA for our centennial...I would like to thank all of the GCA presidents under whom this work has taken place: Alice Mathews, Mary Jo Garre, Joan George and Marian Hill. We thank you for your time and support.”

## AWARDS COMMITTEE.

Centennial year medal winners were:

- ❖ The Frances K. Hutchinson Medal awarded to figures of national importance for distinguished service to conservation to **Gerald W. Adelmann**, President and CEO of Openlands in Northeastern Illinois, for being an extraordinary champion of the national world.
- ❖ The GCA Medal of Honor for outstanding service to horticulture to **The American Chestnut Foundation** for outstanding dedication to the restoration of the American chestnut to our eastern woodlands.
- ❖ The Katharine Thomas Cary Medal for outstanding achievement in the field of floral design education to **Bliss Caulkins Clark**, a dedicated mentor, inspiring teacher and gifted designer.
- ❖ The Eloise Payne Luquer Medal for special achievement in the field of botany to **Ronald O. Determann** for his expertise in southern plants, orchids and conifers as well as his commitment to preserving the flora of the world; for teaching and sharing his knowledge.
- ❖ The Achievement Medal in recognition of outstanding achievement and creative vision and ability in the interpretation and furtherance of the aims of The Garden Club of America to **Shirley Meneice** for her unfailing enthusiasm in sharing her knowledge while constantly inspiring GCA members to explore the world of horticulture.
- ❖ The Sarah Chapman Francis Medal for outstanding literary achievement related to any aspect of The Garden Club of America interests to **William Merwin**, brilliant poet and passionate conservationist, he aims to 'save what he can' of our natural world. His beautiful verse and exemplary lifestyle are an inspiration.

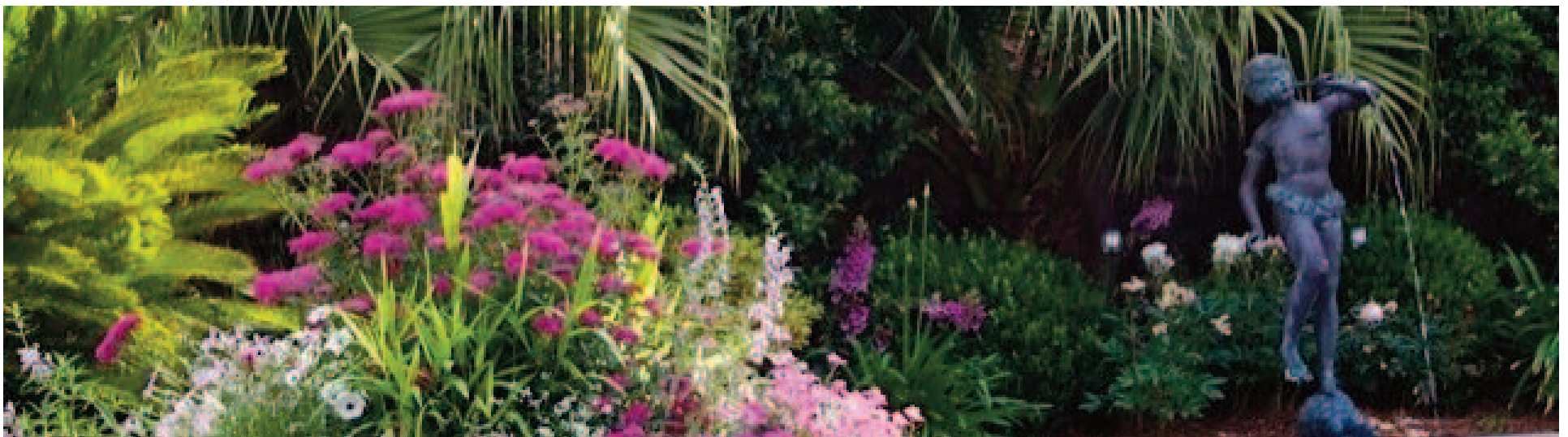


- ❖ The Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal for outstanding achievement in environmental protection and the maintenance of the quality of life to **Frederick S. Middleton III** for 25 years of using the power of the law to protect the environment through the founding and leadership of the Southern Environmental Law Center.
- ❖ The Distinguished Service Medal for distinguished service in the field of horticulture to **Jane G. Pepper** for the exceptional contribution to gardening and urban revitalization in her thirty years of outstanding and innovative leadership of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.
- ❖ The Jane Richter Rose Medal for outstanding achievement in rose culture to **Stephen Scanniello** for sharing the joy, history and wonder of roses and inspiring a new generation of rosarians.
- ❖ The Margaret Douglas Medal for notable service to the cause of conservation education to **Douglas W. Tallamy**, entomologist, author, dedicated teacher and charismatic speaker, who proved through research the synergy between life-sustaining native plants, insects, birds and other wildlife in our local environments.



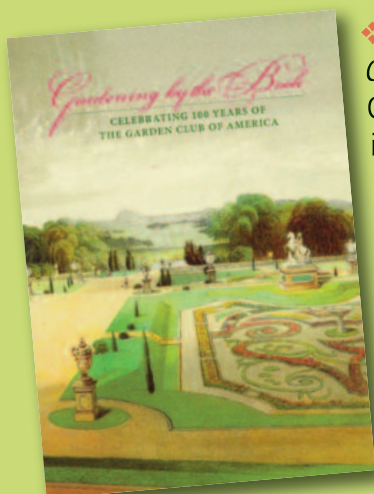
## BULLETIN COMMITTEE.

In May 1913, the first Bulletin was edited and published by the GCA's president, Mrs. Willis Martin. It included four black-and-white pages. Today, the GCA Bulletin is a 40-page, four-color glossy magazine with paid advertising that in 2013 covered the cost of production. Through the years, the Bulletin has evolved to meet the needs of the GCA member clubs while maintaining the standards that were set a century ago. The Bulletin continues its mission to keep member clubs informed of the international, national and local scope of the GCA activities and 'allows members to communicate and exchange ideas,' just as they did in 1913. For the first time, 2013 saw the publication of the Bulletin online on the GCA website.



## The Centennial Celebration

- ❖ 2008-2013 Centennial Tree Project: Nationwide launch through completion of the Centennial Tree Project, developed by the Horticulture Committee.
- ❖ 2009-2013 *Narcissus* 'The Garden Club of America': The selection and registration of a daffodil with The Royal Horticultural Society; over 10,000 bulbs planted as part of the 2013 Centennial Founders Fund Project in Central Park.
- ❖ 2008-2013 *The Garden Club of America-100 Years of a Growing Legacy*: Undertaken by the GCA's Book Committee, contracting the research and writing of GCA Centennial history book by renowned preservationist and historian William Seale; published by Smithsonian Books.
- ❖ May-July 2013 *Gardening by the Book-100 Years of The Garden Club of America*: Planned and orchestrated by the GCA's Library Committee, A Major Exhibit of the GCA's rare and important book collection and accompanying catalogue, on display at The Grolier Club in New York City, the oldest bibliophilic organization in North America.
- ❖ May 2013 *A Lasting Legacy*: Overseen by the GCA's liaison to the Royal Horticultural Society, and mounted in celebration of the RHS and the GCA joint centennial, the GCA's exhibit at Chelsea Flower Show was honored with the prestigious Silver-Gilt Medal.
- ❖ 2013 Centennial Pollinator Fellowship: Funded by the GCA Board of Associates, the Centennial Pollinator Fellowship was created to promote the study of pollinators.
- ❖ 2013 Centennial Annual Meeting: Held in Philadelphia, the city of the GCA's founding, and attended by all 200 member clubs; Philadelphia Airport exhibit "The Garden Club of America Celebrates 100 Years"
- ❖ November 2012 Catesby Tercentennial Conference: Supported by the GCA, Catesby Commemorative Trust and the Society for The History of Natural History hosts conference of scholars at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC.



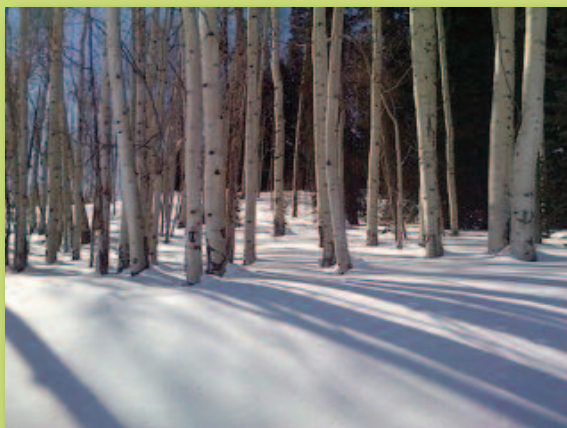
## CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE.

The Centennial Committee began planning events leading up to the GCA's 100th birthday in 2008. The celebration culminated in New York City in June of 2013 when members of the GCA clubs around the country toured headquarters, explored the GCA rare book collection, enjoyed a reception at the American Academy in Rome (the GCA's first scholarship partner), participated in the dedication of the Central Park renovation (our 2013 Founders Fund gift) and celebrated at a gala dinner.



As part of the dual centennials of both the GCA and the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show, the GCA was invited to exhibit at the 2013 show held in Chelsea. The 20' x 15' display, *A Lasting Legacy*, highlighted the major achievements of the GCA, beginning in the 1930's with our initiative to save the redwoods. Major GCA achievements were carved into large timber stepping stones surrounded by a lush planting representing the serene understory of a redwood grove. Congratulations to Sarah Carey, GCA/RHS Liaison, her U.S. committee & the former GCA Interchange Fellows who designed the exhibit, for winning the Silver Gilt Medal. Many GCA members came from across the 'pond' to celebrate this historic achievement for the GCA!"

From the May 2013 issue of *GCA eNews*



"If government has sometime failed to act with regard to the conservation of America's natural resources, it is clear that the women of the GCA have not suffered the same failing...From its inception, the organization has been at the forefront of many conservation issues and doggedly held on to those core passions...Dedicated members have dug deep into the earth to actually restore the damage to the environment. From propagating endangered wild flowers, to planting seedlings to reforest the national parks, to removing exotic, invasive species preventing the growth of the native flora, club members have put their sweat equity into the issues. They have also learned to garden without toxic chemicals, use water efficiently, reduce energy use, recycle everything and worked tirelessly to teach others how to do so. The past has been fraught with challenges to the environment met by the dedicated and indefatigable members of garden clubs who educated, communicated and advocated for the issues they believe in. If past is prologue to the future, the GCA will continue its great tradition of being one of America's premier conservation organizations."

*The History of Conservation in  
The Garden Club of America 1913-2013*

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE.

Dedicated to furthering the goals of the GCA – from the development and maintenance of the GCA website to assisting local clubs in building their own websites, from enhancing the effectiveness of inter-committee communications to supporting national outreach – the Communications Committee is the committee that links all GCA efforts together.

For the GCA's centennial, the committee updated the general GCA brochure and created an online, downloadable version. The GCA website continues to grow with increased usage. It is the place to go for GCA publications, online registration, policies and procedures and all kinds of general and detailed information on the GCA committees and zones.



## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE.

The Conservation Committee congratulated the GCA on its centennial year by publishing Meeting Sustainability Guidelines to inform GCA member clubs and committees on the advantages and means of attaining sustainability. In addition, the committee celebrated the GCA's enduring commitment to conservation with *The History of the Conservation in the Garden Club of America 1913-2013*.

Natasha Hopkinson, GCA/CPC Liaison accepted the Founders Fund award on behalf of the Central Park Conservancy:

"I hope you saw the park sometime around mid-April when all 10,000 daffodils were in bloom – providing a truly amazing site. A newly planted Oak Tree will specifically celebrate our centennial along with dogwoods and Camassias that will enhance the scenery into the summer and fall.

Frederick Law Olmsted was the landscape architect largely responsible for the design of Central Park with its winding paths, scenic views and wide-open areas.

Olmsted believed in and placed great value on the difference nature could make in the character of mankind. He often quoted John Ruskin by saying, 'Let it not be for present delights, not for present use alone; let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think...

that a time is to come when...men will say, 'See! This our fathers did for us.'"



## FLOWER SHOW COMMITTEE.

Over 50 GCA and club flower shows were held during the 2012-2013 year. To further its focus on education, the committee sponsored two very successful floral design workshops, one in Palm Beach with Bruno Duarte and one in Copenhagen with Annette von Einem, and a Photography Study Group trip to the Galapagos. In her October 2012 report to the GCA Board of Directors, committee chair Laura Haley states:

"As we joyfully embark on this Centennial year, the major goal of the committee is to encourage and support as many flower shows as possible. Flower shows and their accompanying events allow sponsoring clubs to develop their unique personality and promote the GCA mission statement. Fostering fellowship, increasing public awareness and generally educating others in artistic, horticultural and environmental endeavors is a pure expression of our passion."



## FOUNDERS FUND COMMITTEE.

The East 69th Street entrance to Central Park in New York City was chosen as the recipient of the 2013 Award in celebration of The Garden Club of America's Centennial Anniversary. This unique Founders Fund award was made possible by the generosity of all 200 clubs, the Board of Associates and major individual donors. It serves as a ideal example of The Garden Club of America coming together to achieve a shared goal. The Award was presented to the Central Park Conservancy at the GCA 2013 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia.



## GARDEN HISTORY & DESIGN.

By adding to the 7000 gardens in the Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens collection, the Garden History & Design Committee continues to preserve America's garden heritage. In recognition of the GCA centennial, the GH&D brochure was revised and 23 gardens were accepted into the AAG. Both members of GCA clubs and outside organizations around the country were recognized for their participation in the work of garden history & design through 90 awards and commendations at the club and zone level. The committee was delighted that a photograph taken by a member was selected by the Smithsonian to be used on their 2012 Christmas card. And finally, the committee's Annual Meeting exhibit won the prestigious Ann Lyon Crammond Award for its outstanding educational exhibit.



## HISTORIAN:

The gathering of relevant historic facts by the GCA historian makes possible an invaluable resource for clubs and members to utilize. Miss Ernestine Goodman, the first historian, authored many documents including *The Garden Club of America History, 1913 - 1938*. Margory Gibbon Battles and Catherine Colt Dickey wrote *Fifty Blooming Years, 1913-1963* to celebrate the GCA's half-century mark. Today, the GCA's historian, Anne Myers, plans to begin an oral history project that will enrich our archives with a wealth of memories and experiences from past GCA president and longstanding GCA club members.

### *Trees, Our Living Legacy* *Preserving the Past, Growing the Future*



## HORTICULTURE COMMITTEE:

2013 saw the completion of the Horticulture Committee's epic achievement, the **Centennial Tree Project**. All 200 clubs participated and over 24,000 trees have now been planted across America to commemorate the GCA's centennial. Reports on each of the projects were compiled and spreadsheets created that identify all the plants by club and tree name. These compilations, plus the beautiful watercolor map depicting the project, appear on the GCA website. A bound book containing all piece of the project was presented to the GCA and is now in the GCA's archives.

## HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE:

The Hospitality Committee recognized the GCA's centennial by continuing Café GCA's tradition of fine and talented service. Over the course of the 2012-2013 year, they served over 2,000 meals at HQ, most of them during meeting national quarterly meeting weeks. This dedicated team of volunteers serves a combination of home-made and catered meals for the convenience of meeting attendees. Visiting GCA clubs and club members are always welcome at HQ and are greeted with warm hospitality.

## HOUSE COMMITTEE:



In preparation for the GCA centennial, the House Committee completed both the renovation of the President's office as well as an inventory and assessment of all antiques and furniture owned by the GCA. In addition, the committee provided trained docents for HQ tours during centennial celebration week and finished its 'virtual tour' of head-quarters for those club members who were unable to attend in person. This short video is on the GCA website and was designed and narrated by committee chairman, Christina Vanderlip.

## JUDGING COMMITTEE:

Maintaining and promoting the standards of excellence set by GCA in flower shows is the purpose of the GCA's Judging Committee. During 2012-13 the committee continued to refine and improve the online forms utilized by all 1000+ members of the GCA's judging program. Successful streamlining of the processes resulted in the number of forms decreasing from 151 to eleven! More and more judges did their work at flower show using mobile-friendly applications of the *Flower Show & Judging Guide* 'yellow book'. The committee approved 25 new judges and an additional 50 prospective and candidate judges were welcomed into the program.



## LIBRARY:

In honor of the GCA's Centennial, the Library Committee curated a very special exhibition at The Grolier Club of New York City, the country's oldest bibliophilic organization. Mounted to highlight the GCA's Rare Book Collection, *Gardening by the Book* commanded the largest opening attendance that The Grolier has seen in years. The exhibit displayed unique books from the GCA collection. The Library Committee, chaired by Arete Warren, compiled, reviewed, printed and sold a 256-page catalogue to accompany the exhibit.



Armed with a gardener's knowledge of the natural world, we voice and act on advocating for clean air and water, protection of public lands and parks, support for sustainable agriculture, and responsible transportation policy. All these issues affect daily life in immeasurable ways. We have lobbied for the Restore Act that will go towards repairing damage on the Gulf Coast, for funding for parks and open spaces, and against pollution. The GCA's passion to try to improve and preserve natural resources and habitats will continue. The GCA's history of civic engagement is a long and proud one that was highlighted in Amy Frietag's presentation at the Centennial Annual Meeting. Persevering in the GCA mission does make a difference—both in D.C. and in our home communities....Melissa McAdams, NAL Committee Chair

The GCA's current position papers cover the following areas:

❖ **Sustainable agriculture, seed diversity, and food security** (issued in 2013). The GCA encourages agricultural policies that support conservation of healthy soil on farms, including a strong and well-funded conservation title in the Farm Bill;

habitats for protecting native plant communities and whole ecosystems, the GCA supports making conservation the system's top priority along with ensuring adequate resource levels to maintain the parks.

❖ **Preservation of Native Plants.** Viewing the Endangered Species Act as one of America's landmark pieces of conservation legislation, the GCA supports measures to protect the nation's rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitat and create workable science-based recovery programs.

❖ **National Public Lands.** Recognizing the ever-increasing pressure for multiple uses of federal lands, the GCA supports strengthening public policy to make resource protection and preservation the first priority in establishing public land policy. This includes full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and using the federal portion of that fund to purchase and restore public lands.

❖ **Environmentally responsible transportation legislation.** The GCA favors legislation that encourages biodiversity in roadside plantings, fosters the creation and maintenance of scenic byways, emphasizes protection of the natural landscape, addresses the hazards of electronic billboards, and preserves the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process.

❖ **Clean air.** The GCA supports the Clean Air Act and urges a reduction in the amount of greenhouse gases through an integrated strategy of regulated emission caps, improved energy efficiency, and greater use of renewable energy sources.

❖ **Clean water.** The GCA supports policies to protect the quantity and quality of our nation's water resources. This includes preserving ecosystems and reducing water pollution through a vital and broad-based Clean Water Act, and protecting coastal waters and the world's oceans through national and global initiatives.

❖ **Strategies to address climate change.** With an emphasis on encouraging action to preserve biodiversity, the GCA is committed to educating members and communities about the causes of climate change and constructive responses.

❖ **National Park System.** Recognizing the national parks as irreplaceable treasures as well as critical

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE:

Though somewhat clouded by 2013's unprecedented budget sequestration event, the 300 GCA delegates to the annual NAL meeting in Washington, DC concentrated on the issues covered by the GCA's purpose and position papers. The goodwill towards, and appreciation for, the GCA's 30 years of past endeavors at NAL meetings was evident in the high quality of speakers and the flattering comments made by Congressmen and others who addressed the group. Honoring the GCA's centennial was a popular theme at the meeting. The volunteer activities undertaken by GCA club members in the cause of conservation are impressive and are making a difference across our nation—informing congressmen and women, planting trees, initiating recycling efforts: you name it, we do it. With its emphasis on encouraging action to preserve biodiversity, the GCA is committed to educating members and communities about the causes of climate change and constructive responses.





## NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

The Nominating Committee confirmed Katie Heins, Stony Brook GC, Zone IV, as The Garden Club of America's 40th president beginning on July 1, 2013. Katie's primary motivation for serving the GCA as president is her firm belief in the integrity of the GCA's mission and the support it provides for its 200 member clubs throughout the United States: "For 100 years the GCA has been committed to providing resources to our member clubs that address common concerns, particularly in the areas of conservation and legislative issues. With continual new challenges and threats to our natural environment, education has taken on a new level of importance and I have every confidence The Garden Club of America will embrace and expand its role in teaching others how they can make a difference, both at the local and national level," she said in a press release announcing her appointment.

## PROGRAM COMMITTEE.

During the GCA's centennial year, the Program Committee introduced a number of new and enhanced resources to support the 200 member clubs of the GCA:

- ❖ **Speaker Spotlight**, interviews with some of the GCA's newest and most compelling speakers
- ❖ **'The Program Toolkit'**, a step-by-step guide for planning and managing annual club programs
- ❖ **An online, searchable database** for the GCA Speaker List
- ❖ **New online forms** to collect and track information from member clubs

Other club needs were identified by an online survey that the committee sent to all club program chairs. The results of the survey will inform the committee and help prioritize their continuing efforts. Chairman Debbie Edwards says, "Now the Program Committee can focus its efforts on the next GCA century. Committee members will work in the coming year to explore the needs and expectations of GCA clubs throughout the country. Wouldn't it be wonderful to take advantage of the exciting and far-reaching technologies that currently exist and that emerge every day? Can you imagine having terrific interactive programs that all GCA clubs can tune into with nothing more than their computers, a projector, a microphone and a screen? The possibilities seem endless. You'll be hearing from us!"





## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE:

During 2012-2013, the GCA announced two new scholarships: The Garden Club of America Board of Associates **Centennial Pollinator Fellowship**, funded by donations made by members of the Board of Associates in honor of the GCA's Centennial year, and The Garden Club of America **Iselin Fellowship in Public Horticulture**, a graduate-level fellowship for students interested in a career in public horticulture, will fund its first scholar in the spring of 2014.

The GCA scholarship program will distribute \$263,700 to 74 scholars and award recipients for 2012-2013. In the words of 2013 Scholarship Committee Chair Laurie Davis, "Who can fight invasive plants in New Caledonia, document heirloom vegetables grown in home gardens in Southern Appalachia, collect vascular plants on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation, and study the Mayans' use of medicinal plants in Belize, all at the same time? Supermen...and women. They are your 2012-2013 scholars!"

## VISITING GARDENS:

A Cotswold's celebration in June, legendary Palm Beach in March and Sicily's enchanted isle in April: the Visiting Gardens Committee spent the GCA's centennial year traveling the world in search of new experiences and shared educational opportunities.

Committee chairman Wickie Plant states that, "like all the GCA club members, our committee members are diligent gardeners...in the winter we plan, nurture, fertilize and prune and spring brings our first blooms...each blossoming Visiting Gardens trip becomes the favorite we can't wait to share!"



This Annual Report is a publication of the GCA's Communication Committee.

If you note any errors, please email [communications@gcamerica.org](mailto:communications@gcamerica.org).